

July 27, 2000

*He Keeps Going, and Going . . .*

## **Medicare Plan Makes Clinton the Energizer Bunny of Government-Run Health Care**

In 1994, the horror that was the Clinton health plan (a.k.a. ClintonCare, HillaryCare, etc.) died a slow, well-deserved death. The American people rejected the plan's price controls, its one-size-fits-all benefits packages, and the prospect of a government bureaucrat coming between patients and doctors. But President Clinton is nothing if not persistent. Since then he has tried to sell his failed health care plan to the American public piece-by-piece. His latest scheme to subsidize prescription drugs for everyone up to Bill Gates and Donald Trump is just another piece of his overall strategy for a government takeover of the health care industry.

The President hasn't tried to keep his strategy a secret. On September 15, 1997, he told a union audience of his failed health care plan:

*What I tried to do before won't work. Maybe we can do it another way. That's what we've tried to do, a step at a time until eventually we finish this.*

Sometimes he has succeeded; sometimes he's failed. But each time he retrenches and keeps pushing to give government bureaucrats more control over Americans' medical decisions.

### **Destroying Private Health Insurance**

Every step of the way, the first piece of the President's strategy has been to cripple private health care. This allows him to use the problems he himself has caused to argue for more government control.

Most recently, he has pushed a so-called "Patients' Bill of Rights" that would allow trial lawyers to devour employers who provide health coverage to their employees. While he claims this would benefit patients, the President knows employers would drop coverage to protect themselves from lawsuits, causing millions of Americans to lose their health coverage.

The President doesn't just *know* this would happen, *he's counting on it.*

## Expanding Government Control Over Patients

As the intended and unintended consequences of government interference aggravate patients and providers, President Clinton plays to this frustration by calling for more government control.

**A One-Size-Fits-All Benefits Package.** Patients and providers often become frustrated by the rigidity of employer-based health coverage. Rather than fix the ways government contributes to that rigidity, President Clinton adds to it by advocating benefit mandates that require all Americans to buy the same coverage, irrespective of their needs or ability to pay.

**Government-Run Children's Coverage.** When nationalizing health care insurance proved too big a bite of the apple, the White House decided on smaller bites. Their first bite: children. A back-up plan developed by First Lady Hillary Clinton's health care task force called, "Option 3: Kids First Coverage," gave them the guidance they needed to bring them closer to their final goal of government-run health care:

*This proposal is designed in two parts, which will be implemented simultaneously: (1) The quick coverage of children — 'Kids First'; and (2) the development of structures for transitioning to the new system and the phasing in of certain population groups. [White House Health Care Interdepartmental Working Group, 4/9/93]*

Rather than look at the many ways government makes health care unaffordable for families with children, Bill and Hillary Clinton claimed uninsured children needed government coverage, knowing that this was in fact "a precursor to the new system." They got their wish in 1997 when they pushed through Congress the State Children's Health Insurance Program (P.L. 105-33).

**Government Coverage for Near-Retirees.** Next, President Clinton used the fact that many uninsured Americans are just a few years from being Medicare-eligible to argue for expanding the Medicare program to people as young as 55.

**Government-Run Prescription Drug Coverage for Seniors.** The President recently proposed a prescription drug benefit for Medicare recipients. Naturally, his proposal would destroy the private market (which already covers 70 percent of seniors) as employers and others drop coverage. Medicare premiums would triple within 10 years. The President's plan also would add new layers of mandates and bureaucracy to an already beleaguered Health Care Financing Administration, which, according to the General Accounting Office, is still "in the early stages" of implementing the mandates Congress passed *four years ago*.

For the sake of America's seniors, Congress should defeat President Clinton's final attempt to implement HillaryCare.

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